

The New Heaven And The New Earth



by Pastor Lee Roberson, D.D. (1909-2007)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." —REVELATION 21:1-8

The last word of Revelation 20 is "fire." It refers to the eternal fires in Hell and to the eternal abode of all who reject Christ.

In my last message I spoke of that tragic time when the unsaved dead will be resurrected and brought to stand before the great white throne. It is a picture that stirs our hearts and drives us into the work of soul winning. We are made to question, "Will we have loved ones and friends who will stand in the great white throne judgment to hear their final doom pronounced by the Eternal Judge? Will someone be there because we failed to give the message of redemption to them?

But now we turn to the thought of Heaven. You will be noticing that the Spirit of God will keep us near to sad thoughts even as we have pictured the glorious future of every believer.

In the Scripture before us tonight may we notice three things:

I. The Passing of This Earth and This Heaven.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

Along with this verse we must read again Revelation 20:11:

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

These two verses are certainly speaking of the same things--that time when the present earth and heaven will pass away. The Apostle Peter deals with the same matter in 2nd Peter 3:10-14:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

There are some who choose to interpret these verses as meaning that this earth will be purified by fire just as it was cleansed by water in the day of Noah. But it seems to me that these words mean even more than that. The repeated statement is that the old 'earth and heaven shall flee away.' or "pass away with a great noise," and the statement, "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Though it may tax our faith, I believe that we do right by the Word of God when we accept what it says.

Jesus had such a matter in mind when He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." This does not seem to me that things will simply be changed or purged, but that there will be a passing away. And let us recall also verse 5 in Revelation 21, "Behold, I make all things new." This suggests that God will make things by a creative act , just as He did in the beginning.

Now, to take the place of this earth and this heaven, there will be created a new heaven and a new earth. This is given in Isaiah 65:17, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Note also Isaiah 66:22, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain."

Just as God brought this world into existence out of nothing, so can He turn it into nothing, and create a new heaven and a new earth.

II. The Picture of New Things

We are now looking at the eternal state. We are beyond the millennium. We stand upon the brink of eternity and see the things which are promised to all believers. Scofield says that there are seven new things given in the last two chapters of the Bible: the new heaven, the new earth, the new people, the new Jerusalem, the new temple, the new light, and the new paradise.

This new city which John saw coming down from God to the new earth will be the home of the redeemed. It is that better country for which Abraham and the patriarchs looked. It is the place that God has prepared for His saints.

A description of it is given in Revelation 21:9 to the end of the Bible. It will be a vast place, lighted by the presence of God. It will be a dwelling place of our Lord, for He is coming to dwell with His people. This place is so glorious that God uses negatives to describe it.

1. **No sin.** "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Revelation 21:27). Sin has brought the terrible condition which we see before us today. Let your mind dwell upon a place where there will be no sin.
2. **No curse.** "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Revelation 22:3). The curse which came upon the earth because of man's sins will be done away.
3. **No sorrow.** "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying..." (Revelation 21:4). All tears will be wiped away, and sorrow will be wiped away, and sorrow will be a thing of the past.
4. **No pain.** "Neither shall there be any more pain." In that eternal home there will be no sickness, no need for hospitals, no drives to raise money to combat tuberculosis, cancer, or heart disease. No children afflicted with polio--there will be only everlasting health for all of God's children.
5. **No separation.** "And they shall see his face...and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:4, 5). After the saints are caught up to be with the Lord, we have the assurance that we shall ever be with Him. There will be no farewells in Heaven, no separation.

My wife and I were discussing a matter that deeply touched our hearts. We learned that our missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. J. B. Williams, located in Africa, must be separated from their little daughter by a distance of seven hundred miles. Because of the climate where they are working, she is unable to stay with them, and they are forced to send her to a distant place. They get to see her but once a year.

Many times people have written me asking that I try to locate some loved one. Occasionally it is a father who wants to see his boy before he dies. Thank God for the promise of a place where there is no separation!

6. **No darkness.** "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light..." (Revelation 22:5). In the presence of the new city which is coming down upon the new earth, the light of the world will be present, and there will be no darkness. The city will have no need of the sun, neither the moon, for "the Lamb is the light thereof."

7. **No death.** "And there shall be no more death." Death is forever put down. It will be crushed beneath the feet of Christ. Christ will reign until death is conquered, and then He will deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father. May we read this in 1st Corinthians 15:24-26:

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

These are things that will make every believer homesick. May we let our minds dwell upon them, and look forward to the day of fulfillment.

III. The Plea of the Holy Spirit

After a description of eternal things, the Holy Spirit turns to a plea for sinners to come to the Lord. In verse 6 of Revelation 21 we read, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." If you are thirsty for the things of God, here is your invitation, 'Come . . . take the water of life freely.'

The word "freely" reminds us of our free salvation. The Spirit is anxious to keep every man from thinking that he can earn salvation by good works and a good life. No, salvation is the free gift of God and is given to all who will come and take.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." —EPHESIANS 2:8,9.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." —ROMANS 6:23.

In verse 7 of Revelation 21 we have a promise to over-comers, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." There is but one way to overcome, and that is by the blood of the Lamb. Receive Christ, take the water of life freely, and in Christ there is victory.

Another warning and plea comes from the Holy Spirit. In verse 8 we read, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

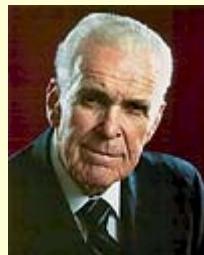
You may be saying that you do not belong in the class of such terrible sinners, but please notice the fifth word in that verse, "unbelieving." The terrible, awful punishment of Hell is for those who do not receive the truth and thus be saved. Hell is for lost sinners and the sin of all sins is unbelief.

God is a God of love. He is kind and merciful, but He cannot pardon those who hate and despise the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we see in the midst of the picture of Heaven a plea unto men to be saved.

Are you one who has received the water of life, and through Christ are you overcoming, or are you in the class of those who are fearful and unbelieving, rejecters of the loving Saviour, and bound for the lake of fire and brimstone? Come now to the Saviour while there is yet time and opportunity to be saved.

SOURCE: Chapter 14 from the excellent book, *Some Golden Daybreak*, by Dr. Lee Roberson, D.D. (copyright 1957)

[Table of Contents](#)



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